

# Smart new homes go green

We will be completing two new housing schemes this year which are rather different.

The first one is a 10 home development in the village of Pebmarsh in Essex and this will be the first of our schemes to be heated using Air Source Heat Pumps rather than conventional gas or electric systems. This is a 'green technology' that takes air from outside the home and uses that air to heat water and radiators in the home. (It works even if it's cold outside). The running costs are much lower than conventional electricity, gas or oil.

The Pebmarsh homes will be ready in August – September this year. It is a village site and so priority will be given to local people who already live in the village or who have family in the village.

The second scheme, ready in October is in Thetford and has even more 'green credentials'. 15 homes



– ten for rent and 5 shared ownership have been designed to benefit from as much solar heat as possible backed up with an air source heat pump. They have triple glazing, underfloor heating and wooden cladding on the outside. Insulation levels are very high and heating costs should be very low.

A couple of the homes are designed to change as the occupant's needs change and a single bedroom can be divided into two at a later stage if an additional room is needed. These will be advertised through the Breckland Key Select Choice Based letting system later in the year.

## Need to move?... think about exchanging your home with someone else

From time to time, people's needs change. You may need a bigger house, you may want to down-size when your family has grown up and moved out or you may want to move to a different area to be nearer to family or work. One of the ways you can do this is by exchanging your home with another tenant of a Housing Association or local council.

If you are thinking about exchanging and want to move to the Cambridgeshire or West Suffolk Area, there is a new web-site that can help you to find someone to swap with.

By registering on the Home Link site (which is free) you can advertise your home and look at adverts placed by other tenants wanting to move until you can find a match.

You can't do the exchange without the consent of both landlords so if you do find someone you'd like to swap with, the next step is to contact us and we'll tell you what you need to do.

If you want to move out of the region then there is another website that you can look it:

This scheme charges a small registration fee to link up with potential exchangers but non registered users can carry out basic searches which will show them details of thousands of tenants registered across the country.



[www.home-link.org.uk/MX/](http://www.home-link.org.uk/MX/)

[www.houseexchange.org.uk](http://www.houseexchange.org.uk)

# Smart meter volunteer wanted

Most people are struggling to meet high fuel costs and are looking for ways in which they can save money around the home. We may be able to help. We have a number of "Energy cost monitors" that can help you identify how much it actually costs to keep your lights on or the play station running all day! This little gadget fits to your electricity supply and displays how much electricity you are using

and how much it is costing you. You can use the monitor to show you and your family where you can make changes which could result in saving money.

So if you would like to borrow a monitor for a couple of weeks contact Hazel Egan on 01284 773446 or speak to your housing officer.



## The Joy of Text

Did you know that we are now using Text Connect to send text messages to tenants as an alternative to phoning or sending e-mails? We will use this facility either to remind tenants about appointments or maybe to ask you to contact us about a matter.

You can also contact us the same way.

The number to use is 07797800661 – please make sure your full name or address is in the message so that we know who is contacting us.

The message is received by our Business Support team who will then either deal with your request or pass the message onto the appropriate colleague.

If we don't have your current phone number(s) please let us have them so we have the correct information and are able to get hold of you.

# Silver Surfers

Residents at Field View in Thurston successfully bid for funding from the Bury St Edmunds Round Table which has enabled them to purchase a computer.

Scheme co-ordinator Bridget Woodward said "the new technology has really opened doors for the residents. Not only has it made it easier for them to order shopping and prescriptions, it has also helped them learn new skills and allowed them to keep in close contact with relatives all around the world."

Pictured are residents Iris Mayes who uses the equipment to keep in touch with family abroad and Olive Ellis, vice chair of the tenants club, who is planning to use the equipment to produce future newsletters for the club.



# Staff changes

There have been a few changes in staff since we last updated you in our winter 2008 edition.

Heidi Adams joined in March as Housing Officer replacing Dorothy Rood who had decided it was time to retire from full time employment. Heidi will also be helping with various resident involvement initiatives and will be looking to residents for help with this – see her article elsewhere in this edition

Justin O'Conner joined us in April as Technical Services Manager and replaces Steve Turrell managing our maintenance team and programmes.



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## Community Chest opens up



The 35th Anniversary 'Community Chest' has paid out money to two groups already but still has lots of money in the pot available for community initiatives.

St Mary's Close Residents' Club has received a cheque for just over £3000 to buy a greenhouse and garden furniture for their sheltered scheme. This will allow our more green fingered residents to grow flowers and plants to brighten up their scheme whilst those less keen

on gardening will be able to sit out in the summer months and enjoy the display.

At Field View in Thurston, residents will be using their grant of £1500 to hire a room and a teacher for fortnightly exercise classes to help keep fit and active.

If you can think of something that would benefit your community and you need some money to get it started, then ask us for an application form.

### You said

Tenants whose homes were built with single glazed aluminium windows have been asking us to replace them with double glazed units to help improve the energy efficiency of their home, and assist with the problem of condensation and mould.

### We did

We have agreed to prioritise a replacement programme for any existing single glazed aluminium windows and will fit new external doors at the same time.

The schedule of works will be carried out as follows:

2009 Bloomfield Street,  
Risby Close, Freehold Road

2010 Apsley Court,  
Field View, Oakes Close

Window replacements at St Mary's Close, Mildenhall and Parkway House, Bury St Edmunds will be considered as part of a wider review of these sheltered housing schemes which will take place over the next couple of years.



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# Water saving tips

1	Think about how you and your family are using water – especially in the Summer when it might be in short supply.
2	Always remember to turn the tap off when not using water such as while brushing your teeth - a running tap can waste over 6 litres per minute.
3	Fill a jug with tap water and leave to cool in the fridge. This way you don't have to run the tap for ages just to get a cold drink.
4	Kettles should have enough water for your needs and not filled to the brim
5	A bath typically uses around 80 litres, swap a deep soak for a shallow bath. Don't waste the water afterwards and use your bathwater to water your houseplants or gardens.
6	Before starting your washing machine, wait for a full load – this will use less water than two half loads; so, you'll be able to save money on energy and water.
7	Check out where your main stop valve is and make sure that you can turn it on and off.
8	Use less water by turning the hot tap down rather than the cold tap up
9	By washing your fruits and veg in a bowl rather than under a running tap, you could cut down on water waste effortlessly. As an added bonus, you can use the leftover water to feed your houseplants.
10	A hosepipe can spew as much as 18 litres of water a minute. By using a watering can in your garden you can significantly reduce the amount of water wasted
11	Rather than washing your car with a running hosepipe, try using a bucket and sponge instead
12	You can reduce the amount of water used when flushing the toilet by placing a "Save a Flush Bag" in the cistern. If Anglian Water is your supplier contact them on 08457919155 to request your bag.

## Help save the environment, whilst saving money

**eaga** in conjunction with the government, are offering every household in Great Britain a free eaga ShowerSmart unit.

The eaga ShowerSmart unit is a simple to install attachment for non-electric mixer showers, or bath/shower mixer taps that run off the mains water pressure.

Once fitted the eaga ShowerSmart unit regulates the flow of water from your shower to 7.8 litres per minute.

### Help the Environment

Fitting the eaga ShowerSmart enables the average family to save more than 12,000 litres of water every year, and cut carbon emissions by 1 tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> over its lifetime.

### Save Money

The Building Research Establishment has proposed savings based on a 2-person household of:

- £20 on water bills per year. (where metered)
- £20 on gas bills per year. (where metered)
- The potential for saving £600 over the product's lifetime.

### How to Claim

Call freephone 0800 953 0033 and quote reference SS – DD1  
Visit [www.eaga.com/d2d](http://www.eaga.com/d2d) complete submit the form on line

**FREE**

# Battery and lightbulb collection

## **Babergh District Council** 01473 826622

Batteries and Light bulbs cannot be collected with the recycling bins. They have to be taken to the Waste Centres located at Chelmondiston (Shotley Road, IP9 1EF), Sudbury (01787 296090) or Haverhill (Coupals Close, CB9 7UR)

## **Braintree District Council** 01376 552 525

Light bulbs and Batteries – These can not be collected with waste collections. They can either put in with normal waste or taken to collection sites; Braintree Road, Shalford, CM7 5HQ or Perry Road, Witham, CM8 3YZ

## **Breckland District Council** 01362 656 870

Batteries and Light bulbs should not be placed in any of the bins as they cannot be recycled from the waste collections, however they should be taken to a Household Waste Centre located in Thetford (Burrell Way, Thetford, IP24 3RW)

## **Cambridge City Council** 01223 458 282

Light bulbs can be placed in the black bin but must be wrapped in paper before putting in the black bin. To recycle they can be taken to the Waste Centre in Milton (Butt Lane, Milton. 01223 860674). Batteries can be taken to the waste centre or they can be dropped off at the City Office (Regent Street) – there is a bank for battery recycling there.

## **Forest Heath Council** 01638 719000

Batteries and Light Bulbs are not collected separately by FHDC but they can be taken to any of the Household Waste sites in Newmarket (Depot Road), Mildenhall (Brandon Road), Thetford, (Burrell Way). Normal household light bulbs can be placed in the usual refuse bin and the fluorescent and energy efficient blubs should be taken to the waste sites.

## **Ipswich Council** 01473 432000

Batteries and Light Bulbs are not collected with recycling bins in the Ipswich are. However, they can be taken to the Household Waste centre in Ipswich (Portman's Walk, IP1 2DW)

## **Mid Suffolk District Council** 01449 724500

Batteries and Light bulbs cannot be recycled with the normal recycling bins. They can be taken to the Household Waste Centres in Stowmarket (Old Bury Road, Stowmarket, IP14 1JQ) and Bury St Edmunds (Rougham Road, IP332RN)

## **South Cambridgeshire Council** 03450 450051

Batteries or light bulbs should not be put in the waste bins. There are no facilities for these to be collected with waste in any of the weekly collections. They can be taken to waste sites at Milton (Butt Lane, Milton. 01223 860674) or Thriplow (Gravel Pit Hill, Thriplow. 01223 839001)

## **St Edmundsbury Borough Council** 01284 763233

Batteries can be collected with blue bins – they need to be placed in small bags (provided by St Edmundsbury) and then attached to a pink hook (provided by St Edmundsbury) which attaches to the handle of the blue bin. Light bulbs cannot be collected with normal waste but can be taken to any Household Waste Centre in St Edmundsbury – these are located at various sites



## At your service

If we visit you we will

- Carry identification that you can check with a phone call to our customer service team on 01284 767224
- Arrive at the time we say we will, or give you as much notice as possible if we have to change the time
- Offer appointments out of normal working hours if necessary
- Treat your home with respect

When you report a repair we will

- Provide you with an acknowledgement letter which will give you details of the work required and a clear target time in which the repair will be carried out
- Ensure the work is done on time, to a high standard and to your satisfaction
- Inspect certain jobs to ensure we are getting value for money and to check the quality of the repair

This is the second in a series of our service standards, the full set can be found in your Tenant Handbook

# Develop your voice and be a friend



The Tenants' Voice is continuing to grow and make its presence felt. We consult the group on a range of issues that may affect residents and they also bring things to our attention that they think we need to address.

The group have been out and about talking to people in their area and trying to encourage them to become 'Tenants' Friends'.

Some areas aren't represented yet and we are looking for residents in Bury, Sudbury and Haverhill who could give up a bit of their time to join the Tenants' Voice. The meetings are held for a maximum of two hours in the evening once a quarter and then on top of that there are training sessions and other events that you

can join in if you wish. Don't worry if you haven't done anything like this before, the group is really friendly and everyone is in the same boat – they all share a desire to improve services that they receive and to be able to make a difference.

If you can't give up that sort of time but are happy to be a local representative then why not put yourself forward as a Tenants' Friend to represent your street or estate? Being a Tenants' Friend involves chatting to your neighbours and getting their opinions about things then passing them on to the Tenants' Voice who will raise it with the Society.

Get involved and make your voice heard.

## Coming to an area near you...

We are always looking for ways to involve our Tenants and develop local communities so we are proposing to host an event in a different location each month and are looking for ideas of events that you would like to see happen locally to you.

We have some suggestions including quiz nights, teddy bears picnics, 5 a side football tournaments and coffee mornings but would like to hear your suggestions as well. Some of these events could be held in aid of local charities or in support of local ventures that the whole community could enjoy.

Please have a think about whether any of the above would be of interest to you as locations have not yet been decided or if there is something you would like to see held near you and contact Heidi Adams on 01284 773437.

# You can now pay via our website

Since the launch of our new website, you can now pay your rent, service charge and rechargeable repairs online by debit or credit card.

Simply go to [www.suffolkhousing.org](http://www.suffolkhousing.org) and click on "Pay your rent" on the left-hand side. Then click on "Online rent payment" in the orange "In this section" box on the right-hand side of the screen. You'll then be asked for information about the tenant, property and amount you wish to pay:-

Once you click on the "Pay now" button at the bottom of the screen, you will be redirected to a secure payment website operated by PayPoint:-

Please fill in every box and then click the "Secure Payment" button at the bottom right of the screen. You must enter an email address so PayPoint can send a payment receipt. If you don't have one, you may use **customerservices@suffolkhousing.org**, which will send payment notification to us at Suffolk Housing.

You'll then be directed through to an online receipt screen which you may print if you wish. Please click on "Continue" to return to our website.

